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Trial Closed to Public

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Cairo Editor Pleads Not Guilty of Spying

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CAIRO, Dec. 28 — Mustafa Amin, a dominant figure in the Cairo press until his arrest five months ago, pleaded innocent in a military court Tuesday to charges of spying for the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

But the balding, 51-year-old newspaper editor and publisher, known for pro-Western and anti-Communist sentiments, pleaded guilty to two lesser charges of illegally smuggling 20,000 Egyptian pounds (\$46,000) abroad through foreign contacts.

The state had demanded the death penalty on the espionage charge. The smuggling charges carry a maximum penalty of five years each.

Defense Secrets Involved

Amin's trial began with a brief public session Thursday morning and then went quickly to a closed hearing. The prosecution began its case. The State prosecutor said a closed hearing was necessary because national defense secrets were involved.

Neither the CIA nor Bruce Odell, former American embassy attache named by the Egyptian authorities as Amin's CIA contact, were mentioned during the 15-minute public session.

The United States Embassy has formally taken a hands off attitude toward the trial. Reliable informants reported, however, that United States officials conveyed to the Egyptians the view that Washington would be happy if the trial were played down.

Brother in London

Amin, jailed in July after being arrested while lunching in Alexandria with Odell, looked healthy and composed.

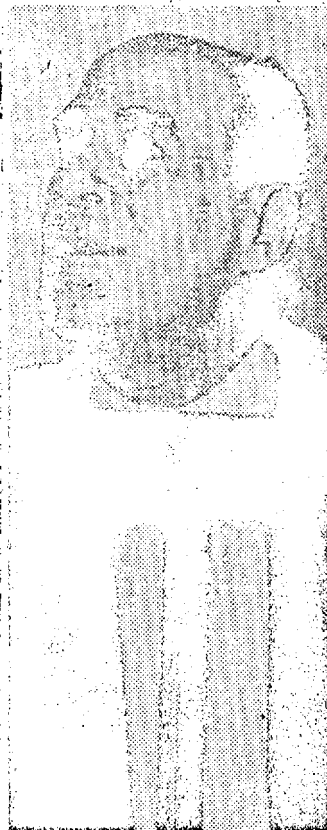
Only about 120 persons, almost all of them newsmen and including many of his former subordinates at the Akhbar Al-Yom publishing house, were on hand for the trial. Among them was his sister-in-law Khairyeh Khairy. Her husband, Ali Amin, the defendant's twin brother, is in London where he went before Mustafa's arrest.

Asked he had any objection to the composition of the court

of three senior army officers named to try him, Amin replied: "Because I am innocent, I welcome any court."

A few moments later he entered his formal pleas.

The state prosecutor said in a brief statement that Amin had "communicated to a foreign state military, political, economic and diplomatic secrets which he was able to obtain through his personal contacts and as editor of Al Akhbar."



AP Wirephoto

Mustapha Amin

He Denies U. S. Tie

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